



2023-2026

# Disability Action Plan

**Austin**  
HEALTH

## Alternative formats

This Disability Action Plan (DAP) is available in alternative formats including e-text, audio and Easy Read.

To receive this publication in your preferred format:

**Call** 9490 7620

**Email** DisabilityLiaison@austin.org.au

## Relay support for phone calls

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**Website** [www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service)

## Are you Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

The Austin Health Ngarra Jarra Program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and their families to navigate the hospital system in a culturally safe way. This may involve advocacy, cultural and emotional support for patients and families, cultural advice for staff, and liaising with Aboriginal controlled community organisations.

To get in touch, call **(03) 9496 5699** or email [ngarra.jarra@austin.org.au](mailto:ngarra.jarra@austin.org.au).

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## Acknowledgement of Country

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land that we work on, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to the ongoing connections to culture and Country, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

# Message from the CEO



I am very pleased to present Austin Health's second Disability Action Plan (DAP).

Around one in five Australians has a disability. The DAP outlines the ways we will work towards a more inclusive culture that ensures representation of people with disability. The plan also highlights what we need to do to be accessible in our built environment and communications, and the ways we will ensure effective and safe patient-centred care for people with disabilities.

We will seek and take the lead from people with lived experience of disability in how we approach this work.

Our commitment to communities and the diverse individuals and groups that we serve is genuine and underscores all our work. The DAP is part of a series of initiatives that aim to ensure that we are responsible, active and responsive in meeting the needs of communities, including our Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

Drafted during the challenging times in 2020 and 2021, I extend my sincere thank you to the more than 100 individuals, service providers and organisations that contributed to this important document. Thank you for contributing your time, lived experience and expertise to this plan.

**Adam Horsburgh**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Austin Health*

# What is a Disability Action Plan?

Austin health endorses models and frameworks that lead to greater access and equity of care for people with disability. The social and human rights models of disability are reflected in this document.

This DAP lays a foundation for our organisational approach to all disability related improvement work.

The plan draws together our existing and future activities under three priority areas, provides targeted strategies and actions to guide our work and key performance indicators to measure our success. Our actions were shaped by consumers, workforce and partner knowledge and aligned with relevant legislation and the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards 2nd edition.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) requires that people with disability be given equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to the full range of economic, social, cultural and political activities. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate, in the provision of goods, services or facilities, against people on the basis that they have, or may have, a disability.

This DAP supports our obligations under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



*A DLO team member helping a consumer to access Austin Health services.*

The Victorian Disability Act 2006 requires all public sector bodies to have in place a Disability Action Plan (DAP). Section 38 of the Act identifies four outcomes the Austin Health DAP will address:

- 1** Reducing barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services and facilities.
- 2** Reducing barriers to people with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment.
- 3** Promoting inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community.
- 4** Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.





# Our Values

At Austin Health we are proud of our values. They define who we are, shape our culture and the behaviours, practices and mindsets of our people. Our values guide how we work with each other, and with our patients, the community and our partners. Living these values each day enable us all to be successful and bring our best selves to work.



## Our actions show we care

We are inclusive and considerate. We appreciate one another, always listening and interacting with compassion.



## We bring our best

We are guided by the needs of our patients, bringing commitment, integrity and energy to everything we do. We are passionate about delivering excellence.



## Together we achieve

Our culture of collaboration means we work openly with our people, our community and beyond to achieve great outcomes.



## We shape the future

Through research, education and learning we innovate, exploring new opportunities that will change healthcare for the better.

# Our Commitment



This DAP reflects our commitment to:

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Victorian Disability Act 2006
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

This DAP reflects:

- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Inclusive Victoria 2022-2026
- The Victorian Autism Plan
- Victorian Carer Strategy 2018-2022
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

# Our Community

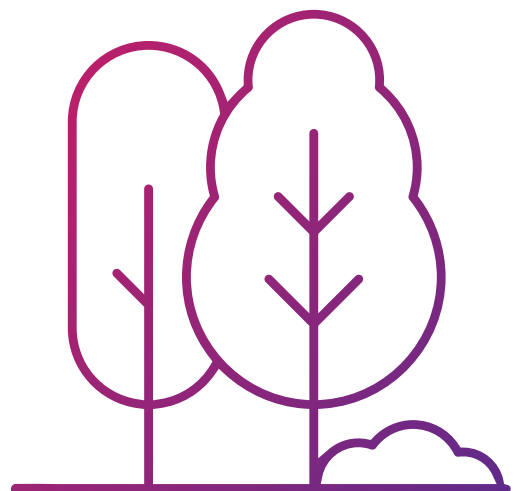
Our primary catchment of more than 343,000 people covers three Local Government Areas.

Every year we:

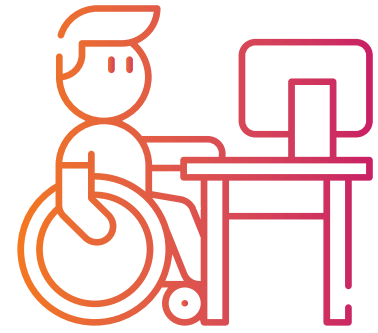
- provide emergency services to more than 86,000 patients
- admit 110,000+ inpatients
- operate 1100+ inpatient beds

This DAP recognises that diversity brings differing expectations of healthcare and how we are continually considering:

- an increasing shift toward community-based care
- a whole-of-patient approach replacing the traditional approach of focusing on clinical specialities and single diseases
- technological advancements that change the way we deliver care
- our COVID-19 response and recovery



# Our Consumers



As our community grows, healthcare needs are more complex. Our consumers are well informed and rightly expect greater control over what, how and where they receive care. They want to partner in decision making and be provided opportunities for planning and designing improvements to meet their expectations now and into the future.

We define patient expectations as a common language that we use to measure success in the design and delivery of care. To meet patient expectations, we focus on delivering person-centred care that is respectful and responsive to the preferences, needs and values of patients and the community.

Our approach to person-centred care is underpinned by effective communication to develop a deep understanding of each person.

## Our patient centred care principles:

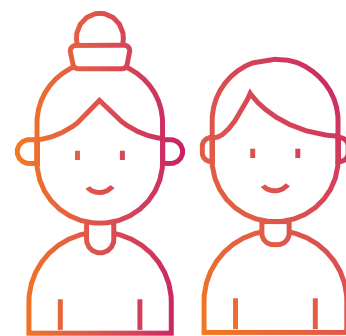
- Access to care
- Respect and Dignity
- Coordination of Care
- Communication and Education
- Physical Comfort
- Emotional Support
- Family and Carer Participation
- Transition of Care

We intend through this DAP and into the future to proactively strengthen our relationships with consumers.



*Disability liaison officers supporting a patient with disability at the neurodiverse vaccination clinic*

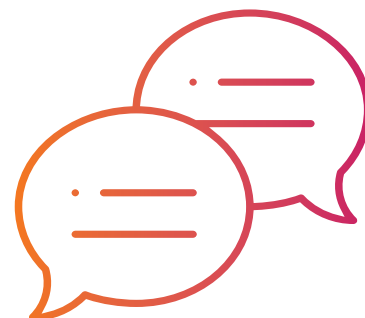
# Our People



Our people underpin our success and our strong reputation among partners, peers and the community. Our 9,500 staff and volunteers provide compassionate, high-quality care to some 350,000 people across the municipalities of Darebin, Banyule and Nillumbik, as well as the broader community through several state-wide services. This DAP reinforces our culture where accessibility and inclusion are recognised across the organisation.

Building a welcoming culture that is positive, open and transparent is a key focus for our organisation. We have a Code of Conduct that sets out how we expect our staff to engage with each other and our patients

# Consultation



This DAP was developed throughout a challenging 2020 and 2021 and we thank the 100+ stakeholders who shared their expertise, time and experiences. It is this input that will drive meaningful and achievable improvements for our consumers and our workforce.

Who we heard from:

- People with disability, family, carers, friends and support workers
- Local, regional and State-wide disability services, peak and advocacy groups
- Workforce
- Consumer partners
- Local government disability networks
- Department of Health

# Monitoring and Reporting



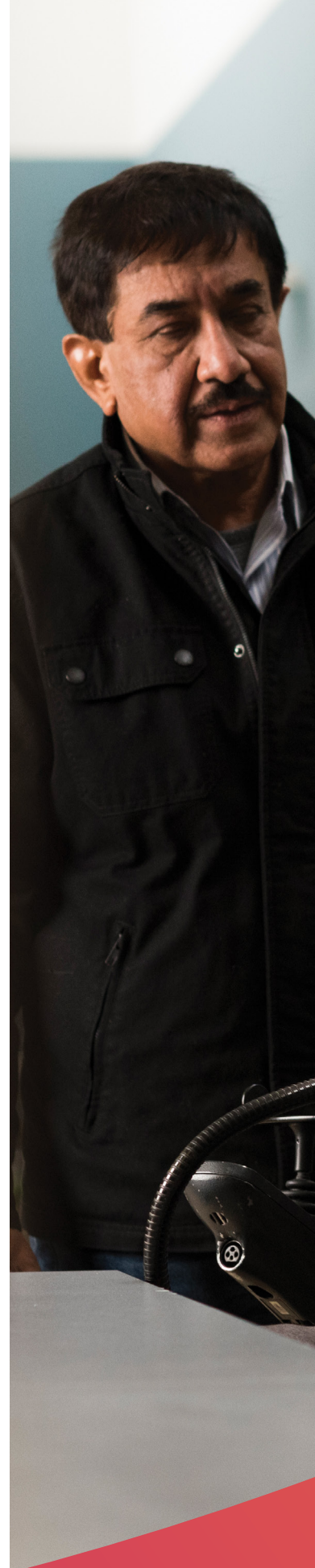
Austin Health will take a phased approach to implementing this DAP.

- Year 1 (2023) will see the organisation strengthen a range of foundational activities that will have an immediate impact on our patients, our community and our people
- Year 2-3 (2024-2025) will be a phase of continued action and introduction of new initiatives across a range of programs and services that will better serve the diverse needs of consumers and community
- Year 4 (2026) we continue with best-practice efforts to provide and plan for a world class health service that is accessible to everyone, now and into the future

A new Austin Health Disability Inclusion Committee brings together those with lived experience and disability subject matter expertise and a commitment to deliver this DAP.

The Disability Inclusion Committee will:

- oversee the DAP actions, coordinate activities and evaluate against key performance indicators
- report on the DAP performance to the organisation and external partners
- work with stakeholders to improve and plan the DAP actions ongoing
- make the DAP accessible and available on the Australian Human Rights Commission registry

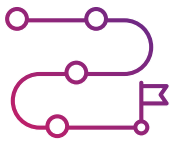
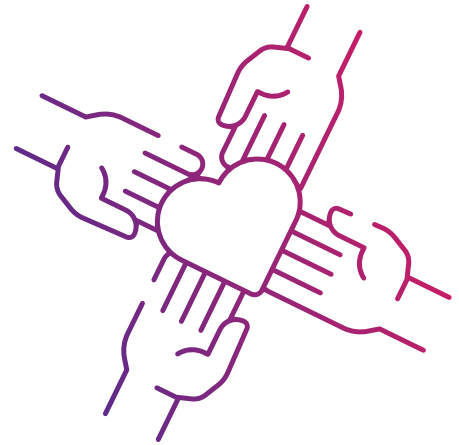




# Priority areas, strategies and commitments

## Priority Area 1 **Inclusive**

We create an inclusive culture by ensuring representation of people with disability.



### Strategies

- Increase the visibility, voice and representation of staff and consumers with disability
- Increase the number of people with disability across the workforce
- Deliver disability education and training to build workforce awareness, knowledge and capabilities



### Commitments

Austin Health will establish the Disability Inclusion Committee to govern the Disability Action Plan. It will work in close partnership with the Disability Liaison Officer Program to implement key strategies of the plan.

By increasing the voice of people with disability, we will challenge outmoded attitudes and ensure our care is inclusive. Greater representation of people with lived experience will enable us to influence the planning, design and evaluation of care.

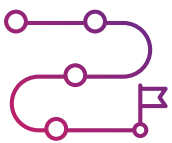
The Disability Inclusion Committee will also support the implementation of Austin Health's first workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan.



## Priority Area 2

# Accessible

Our built environments, information and communication are accessible to people with disability.



### Strategies

- Identify and address barriers to the built environment
- Improve the accessibility of information



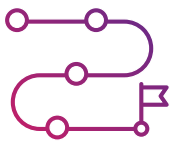
### Commitments

Austin Health will identify areas where improved accessibility is feasible within existing infrastructure and all future built environment initiatives will be guided by universal design principles. We will work to improve the accessibility of information by educating our workforce and ensuring communication platforms including telehealth are aligned to information accessibility standards and have a strong continuous improvement focus.

# Priority areas, strategies and commitments

## Priority Area 3 **Effective**

Our actions provide effective and safe patient centred care.



### Strategies

- Strengthen partnerships to inform improvements and address intersectional and systemic issues
- Improve health outcomes and patient experiences
- Improve the health service and NDIS interface



### Commitments

Austin Health will continue to work with existing partners to focus on improved health outcomes and consumer experience. We will develop a shared definition of disability and in collaboration with other health services will improve medical record identifiers and meaningful data collection. Improved care initiatives for NDIS participants, Autistic people and physical, intellectual, sensory or psychosocial disability will be prioritised. The DLO program will engage with all parts of the organisation and community to establish the program as a centralised point of support and information to ensure health workers and consumers have the information they need to deliver and access high quality care.



## **For more information**

Please contact Austin Health's  
Disability Liaison Officers via email,  
phone or in writing:

[DisabilityLiaison@austin.org.au](mailto:DisabilityLiaison@austin.org.au)

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